

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA COURT OF APPEALS

James R. Watson, Jr.,
Appellant,

v.

Lori Lee Creel a/k/a Lori Marie Creel,
Respondent.

Appeal From Florence County Court of Common Pleas
Twelfth Judicial Circuit

Lower Court Case No. 2025-CP-21-02092

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SC Court of Appeals

APPELLANT'S STATEMENT OF ISSUES ON APPEAL

Appellant James R. Watson, Jr., proceeding pro se, respectfully presents the following issues for appellate review:

ISSUE I

Whether the circuit court erred in granting summary judgment and dismissing the action with prejudice where the record reflected unresolved factual matters that the circuit court itself characterized during the May 6, 2026 hearing as questions for a jury.

During the hearing, while addressing the identity/name issue involving Lori Lee Creel and Lori Marie Creel, the circuit court stated that the matter "would be a question for jury." The court thereafter addressed Appellant's motion concerning updated damages, medical costs, and lost income and again stated that those matters "would be a question for jury" and were not for the court to determine that day.

Nevertheless, the subsequent written order determined that no genuine issue of material fact existed and dismissed Appellant's complaint and all claims with prejudice.

ISSUE II

Whether the circuit court erred under Rule 56, SCRCP, by granting summary judgment while discovery relevant to disputed factual matters remained unresolved.

At the hearing, Appellant informed the court that discovery remained incomplete and specifically identified requested financial records, sales information, booking and scheduling records, and communications concerning termination. Appellant argued that those materials were within Respondent's possession and were necessary to evaluate the claims and Respondent's asserted justification.

Respondent's counsel acknowledged that he would need to review the case file to determine whether discovery had been received and what responses or objections were required.

ISSUE III

Whether the circuit court erred in determining as a matter of law that the parties' admitted oral arrangement was insufficiently definite and terminable at will where material factual disputes concerning the parties' relationship and arrangement remained unresolved.

The written order recognizes that Respondent admitted that the parties had an oral arrangement under which Appellant provided DJ services on Wednesday evenings.

The court nevertheless concluded that the arrangement lacked essential terms and was terminable at will, ultimately determining that Appellant failed to establish a genuine issue of material fact requiring trial.

ISSUE IV

Whether the circuit court erred by denying Appellant's motion concerning updated damages, medical costs, and lost income in its final written order after stating during the hearing that those damages presented a question for a jury and were not for the circuit court to determine at that time.

During the May 6 hearing, the circuit court expressly addressed Appellant's claimed lost income and medical expenses and stated:

"That would be a question for jury."

The court further stated that the damages issue was "[n]ot for me to rule on today."

The May 28 written order subsequently denied the Motion for Updated Damages, Medical Costs, and Lost Income while simultaneously dismissing all claims with prejudice.

ISSUE V

Whether the circuit court properly granted summary judgment where Appellant argued that evidence necessary to oppose summary judgment remained within Respondent's possession and had not been produced.

Appellant specifically argued at the hearing that evidence concerning Respondent's asserted profitability justification, Appellant's lost income, booking and scheduling information, and communications concerning termination remained in Respondent's possession. Appellant asked that summary judgment be denied or deferred because discovery was incomplete.

Respondent's counsel responded that the requested business records would be irrelevant because, in Respondent's position, no enforceable contract existed.

ISSUE VI

Whether the circuit court erred in denying Appellant's remaining pending motions on the ground that they lacked sufficient legal or factual support without separately addressing their merits after granting summary judgment.

The written order states that because summary judgment was being granted, the court did not need to separately address the merits of each pending motion, although it nevertheless concluded that the motions lacked sufficient legal or factual support and denied them.

ISSUE VII

Whether the circuit court abused its discretion in denying Appellant's Rule 59(e), SCRCF, Motion to Alter or Amend Judgment where Appellant sought reconsideration of the summary judgment disposition and preservation of unresolved issues.

On July 15, 2026, the circuit court stated that it recalled the prior hearing, determined that another hearing was unnecessary, denied Appellant's Rule 59(e) motion, and filed the Summary Judgment Order as its final order.

RELIEF SOUGHT

Appellant respectfully seeks appellate review of the May 28, 2026 Summary Judgment Order and the July 15, 2026 order denying relief under Rule 59(e), SCRCF.

Appellant seeks reversal or vacatur of the judgment and remand to the Florence County Court of Common Pleas for further proceedings on any claims or issues the Court of Appeals determines were improperly resolved by summary judgment, together with such other relief as the Court of Appeals determines appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

 8/16/24


James R. Watson, Jr.

Appellant, Pro Se

Date: 8/11/20